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SUBJECT: TAIWAN'S DECEMBER ELECTION: REFERENCE GUIDE

REF: TAIPEI 3642

1. On December 3 Taiwan will hold key local "three-in-one" elections for (1) county magistrates and city mayors, (2) county and city councilors, and (3) township and village chiefs. The county magistrate and city mayor elections, however, are receiving the lion's share of media attention as a test of strength between ruling and opposition parties and as an indicator of trends heading into legislative and presidential elections in 2007 and 2008. A total of 77 candidates are registered to run in the 18 county magistrate elections and five city mayor elections (excluding Taipei City and Kaohsiung City, which hold mayoral elections in 2006). The competition is primarily between the "Pan-Green" (independence-leaning) Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the "Pan-Blue" (tending toward improving relations with the PRC) Kuomintang (KMT), with several smaller parties and independent candidates also vying for positions. The fellow Pan-Green Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) has only one candidate for mayor in Tainan, while the Pan-Blue People's First Party (PFP) and New Party have five candidates in play in various elections.

2. KMT officials hope to win back Taipei, Ilan, and Nantou Counties. On the other hand, the DPP hopes to take one or more counties from the KMT but faces strong challenges in Taipei and Ilan Counties, and Chiayi City. The DPP is concerned about the effect of negative publicity from recent scandals on party election prospects, and the KMT hopes to gain a boost from its new Chairman, the youthful and energetic Ma Ying-jeou. The most important race for both parties is Taipei County, which is by far the most populous electoral district on the island.

3. Following is a catalogue of Taiwan's 23 election districts with lists of registered candidates, biographical notes, and an early status report, jointly prepared by AIT/T and AIT/K.

Keelung City

Candidates:

KMT: Hsu Tsai-li (Incumbent)
Keelung native; served as member and Speaker of Keelung City Council for 20 years.

PFP: Liu Wen-hsiung (LY Member, Keelung City)
Keelung native; Legislative Yuan (LY) Member since 1998, first for the KMT, then re-elected for the PFP in 2001 and 2004.

TSU: Chen Chien-ming (former TSU Secretary General)

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Left KMT to join TSU in 2001; served as LY Member for Taipei City, 2001-2004.

Comment: Both Pan-Blue coalition candidates, KMT's Hsu and PFP's Liu, insist on staying in the race, with Liu citing Hsu's age and health problems (diabetes) as a reason to run. The DPP nominee (Wang Tuo) dropped out of the race October 3 and endorsed TSU candidate Chen, giving the Pan-Green coalition a single candidate around whom to rally. While this might enhance Chen's chances by dividing the Pan-Blue vote (which occurred in 1997), Chen is not a Keelung native and has not previously been involved in Keelung politics. Furthermore, recent surveys conducted by Era TV, United Daily News (UDN), and the China Times show Pan-Blue candidates leading the Pan-Green candidates by a small margin, but with a significant number of undecided voters. (Comment: While Taiwan media polls have often proven unreliable in previous elections, they can offer some indications of trends. With that healthy measure of caution, we will include them in this early pre-campaign preview. End comment.)

Taipei County

Candidates:

DPP: Lo Wen-jia
Taipei City native; former Vice Chair of the Council of Hakka Affairs; served as campaign manager for President Chen Shui-bian and as LY Member for Taipei City (2001-2004).

KMT: Chou Hsi-wei
Taipei County native; MPA from University of Southern California; served as LY Member for Taipei County since 1998; served in Taiwan Provincial Assembly (1994-1998).

Comment: Lo, who is popular among younger voters and is a proven campaign organizer, is emphasizing his Hakka ancestry to attract votes from this sizable minority in Taipei County. His strategy of keeping his distance from the DPP leadership in a county that has a majority of Pan-Blue voters may also improve his vote. Meanwhile, public opinion polls show Lo and Chou nearly even, with Chou's popularity on the decline. Chou left the PFP to rejoin the KMT earlier this year, believing it would strengthen his chances of being elected in Taipei county. He is turning to the popular new KMT Chairman, Ma Ying-jeou, for support in hopes of winning the county back from the DPP for the first time in 16 years.

Taoyuan County

KMT: Eric Chu Li-lun (Incumbent)
Earned M.A. and Ph.D. from New York University; taught at National Taiwan University; served as LY Member, Taoyuan County (1998-2001).

DPP: Cheng Pao-ching
Served as LY member (1995-2001); appointed Chairman of state-run Taiwan Salt Corp. after failing in his bid for a third term.

Comment: Chu tied for the highest approval ratings of all city mayors and county magistrates in Taiwan according to a Commonwealth Monthly poll in September. To date, DPP candidate Cheng Pao-ching has made little progress attracting voters in what is widely considered a safe Blue county. The withdrawal of a second Pan-Blue PFP candidate only increased Chu,s lead.

Hsinchu City

Candidates:

KMT: Lin Cheng-che (Incumbent)
Hsinchu native; M.A. from National University (U.S.).

DPP: Chen Hui-yuan (Hsinchu City Councilor)
Member of Hsinchu City Council for 12 years; served as Chen Shui-bian,s Hsinchu City campaign manager in 2000 and 2004.

Comment: Lin is maintaining a large lead over Chen in all public opinion polls to date. The September Commonwealth Monthly survey found almost 73 percent of Hsinchu City residents are satisfied with Lin's performance as Mayor. Recent China Times polls similarly show Lin with 50 percent support to Chen's seven percent, and 43 percent of poll respondents still undecided.

Hsinchu County

Candidates:

KMT: Cheng Yung-chin (Incumbent)
Hsinchu native; served as Member, Deputy Speaker, and Speaker of Hsinchu County Council (1992-1997); served as Hsinchu County Legislator (1997-2001).

DPP: Lin Kuang-hua (Taiwan Provincial Governor)
Hsinchu native; served as Member of Hsinchu County Council, Hsinchu County Legislator (1992-1997), and Hsinchu County Magistrate (1997-2001).

Comment: Cheng received the third highest approval rating in the September Commonwealth Monthly survey of Taiwan county magistrates and city mayors. The DPP is not optimistic about winning Hsinchu County, but Lin is trying to use Cheng,s earlier pledge not to seek reelection to attack his credibility. The charge has not struck much resonance, however, as Cheng,s poll numbers have continued to rise. In an October 3 UDN poll, 47 percent of respondents favored Cheng, though 38 percent remained undecided.

Miaoli County

Candidates:

KMT: Liu Cheng-hung (LY Member)
Miaoli native; has served as LY Member from Miaoli since 1998; earlier served in Miaoli City Council for eight years.

DPP: Chiu Ping-kun
Miaoli native; served as Mayor of Miaoli City for eight years and before that served on the Miaoli City Council.

Independent: Hsu Yao-chang
Miaoli native; has served as LY Member from Miaoli County since 2001; served as Toufeng Town Chief; a PFP member, Hsu is running as independent.

Comment: Incumbent County Magistrate Fu Hsueh-peng, an independent not running for reelection, has agreed to cooperate with the DPP and support DPP candidate Chiu, who withdrew from the KMT to join the DPP after the KMT nominated a non-Hakka politician as its candidate in the race. Chiu may be hurt by President Chen Shui-bian's reported promise of a Central Government job for Fu if Chiu wins. Although the KMT's Liu has a modest lead in recent Era TV and China Times polls, his chances may be jeopardized by PFP Legislator Hsu Yao-chang's insistence on running as an independent Hakka candidate who can unite the county's Hakka majority, thus splitting the Pan-Blue vote in what is usually a strongly Blue county. Three other independent candidates are also running in this race, but they are not considered viable candidates and were not included in recent polls.

Taichung City

Candidates:

KMT: Jason Hu Chih-chiang (Incumbent)
Born in China; Ph.D. from Oxford University; served as Director of Government Information Office, Taiwan Representative to the United States, Foreign Minister, and KMT Secretary-General.

PFP: Shen Chih-hui (LY Member, Taichung City)
Taichung City native; Taichung City LY Member since 1989; KMT member before joining PFP in 2000; background in journalism.

DPP: Lin Chia-lung
Taichung City native; Ph.D. from Yale; former Director of the Government Information Office; served on the National Security Council; served as member of the National Assembly.

Independent: Lee Fu-kui

Comment: Hu's health has remained a concern since he suffered from a minor stroke last year. Lin is young, has a good public image, and has the full support from President Chen Shui-bian and other DPP leaders. Shen may withdraw from the election depending on the outcome of the on-going negotiations between the KMT and the PFP. Hu, however, has a considerable lead in the polls. The latest Era TV poll in August Hu had 48 percent support, DPP challenger Lin had 25 percent support, and Shen about 7 percent.

Taichung County

Candidates:

KMT: Huang Chung-sheng (Incumbent)
Taichung native; served as Chief Secretary of the Wuchi Town Farmers Association and an advisor to the KMT and the China Youth Corps.

DPP: Chiu Tai-san (Vice Chairman, MAC)
Taichung native; LY Member, Taichung County (1998-2004); served as Vice Chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council (2004-2005).

Independent: Lin Cheng-chang

Comment: Despite incumbent KMT County Magistrate Huang's deep ties with local factions and high approval ratings in recent months, he faces a strong challenge from the DPP's Chiu. Independent candidate Lin is probably not a serious threat to either candidate. The DPP views Taichung County as an important battleground and potential win for the party. The young and energetic Chiu is backed by President Chen Shui-bian and the DPP's New Tide Faction. Although Huang had a healthy 16-point lead in the September Commonwealth Magazine poll, nearly half of poll respondents were undecided. The DPP is hoping for a last minute surge in support in Taichung County, which gave DPP President Chen

Shui-bian 55 percent of the vote in the 2004 presidential election.

Changhua County

Candidates:

KMT: Cho Po-yuan (LY Member, Changhua County)
Changhua County native; served as deputy magistrate of Changhua County and member of the Changhua County Council; LY Member, Changhua County, since 2001.

DPP: Weng Chin-chu (Incumbent)
Changhua County native; served as member of the National Assembly; served as LY Member, Changhua County (1992-2001).

Independent: Chen Chin-ting (LY Member, Changhua County)
Member of Nonpartisan Solidarity Union (NSU) party; former National Assembly Member; business background.

Comment: A member of the DPP New Tide Faction, incumbent Magistrate Weng has been preparing for her reelection for a long time. With a potential PFP candidate already out of the race, Weng will be facing Cho head-to-head, and a late September UDN poll shows Weng with a slight lead. Independent Chen has only marginal support.

Nantou County

Candidates:

KMT: Lee Chao-ching (Mayor, Nantou City)
Former Nantou County Councilor; former director of the Nantou City KMT branch office.

DPP: Tsai Huang-lang
Nantou County native; Nantou LY Member for 10 years; resigned earlier this year to run for magistrate; served as Chairman of the DPP Nantou County Committee, 1994-1995.

Independent: Lin Tsung-nan (Incumbent)
Nantou County native; M.A. from Meiji University in Japan; withdrew from the DPP after failing to win the DPP's nomination.

Independent: Lin Ming-chen (Nantou County Council)
KMT member who lost the KMT nomination.

Comment: The Nantou County election is complicated by the presence of two independent candidates, Lin Tsung-nan and Lin Ming-chen. When they lost their respective DPP and KMT party nominations, both bolted to run as independents. Polling by the China Times shows the two Pan-Greens with a moderate lead in the county, with DPP Tsai and Green Independent Lin Tsung-nan almost tied.

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Yunlin County

Candidates:

KMT: Hsu Shu-po (LY Member, Yunlin)
Graduate of Luven University (Belgium); former Taiwan Provincial Government Secretary-General; has served as Yunlin LY Member since 1995.

DPP: Su Chih-fen
Daughter of prominent Taiwan politicians Su Tung-chi (father) and Su Hung Yueh-chiao (mother); served as campaign assistant to a number of DPP politicians including former DPP Chairman Shih Ming-te, former legislator Chou Ching-yu and acting Kaohsiung mayor Yeh Chu-lan; Member of the National Assembly (1996-1999); advisor to the Executive Yuan (1999-2000); served as LY Member, Yunlin County (2001-2004).

Independent: Lin Chia-yu

Comment: The DPP's Su is a major political rival of incumbent KMT Yunlin County Magistrate Chang Jung-wei, who is in custody on corruption charges. The current acting DPP Magistrate, appointed in Chang's place by Premier Hsieh, supports Su. A recent China Times poll shows a very close race, with Su holding a narrow two-point lead over KMT's Hsu, and almost half of voters still undecided. Independent candidate Lin is not a viable candidate.

Chiayi City

Candidates:

KMT: Huang Min-hui (LY Member, Chiayi)
Former high school teacher; served in the National Assembly;
first elected as LY member in 2001.

DPP: Chen Li-chen (Incumbent)
Master in Environmental Medicine, China Medical College,
Taiwan; BA in Public Hygiene Dept., China Medical College,
Taiwan.

Comment: Incumbent DPP Mayor Chen Li-chen, who is very
worried about her re-election prospects, is in a
neck-and-neck race with KMT candidate Huang Min-hui, who has
an excellent reputation and a high popularity rating. A
late-September China Times poll shows the candidates in a
statistical dead heat, with 40 percent of voters still
undecided.

Chiayi County

Candidates:

KMT: Chen Ming-cheng (KMT Chiayi County Chairman)
Recently drafted by KMT to run.

DPP: Chen Ming-wen (Incumbent)
Bachelor, Philosophy Department of Tung Hai University,
Taiwan.

Comment: Incumbent Magistrate Chen Ming-wen is relatively
popular in office, with a 65 percent approval rating in a
September Commonwealth magazine survey. The KMT announced a
candidate at the last minute because they were having trouble
finding anyone to run (see reftel). The incumbent appears
very likely to be reelected since KMT candidate Chen
Min-chen, who is chairman of Chiayi County Chapter, is weak
in terms of popularity and administrative resources. An
October 1 China Times poll shows DPP,s Chen has almost 48
percent support, while the KMT,s Chen trails with only 8.5
percent.

Tainan City

Candidates:

KMT: Chen Jung-sheng
Bachelor in Public Administration, Tung Hai University,
Taiwan; studied at Seattle City Community University; ran as
a KMT candidate in the 2001 Mayoral election; former Tainan
City Councilor (1987-1991); former Provincial Assembly member
(1991-1995).

DPP: Hsu Tain-tsair (Incumbent)
BA and MA in Economics, Chinese Culture University, Taipei;
studied at Rutgers University, New Jersey, in a business
administration doctoral program.

TSU: Chien-Lin Hui-chun (TSU Tainan City Chairperson)

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Former Legislator (2002-2004).

Comment: Although the KMT candidate is not particularly
strong, TSU candidate Chien-Lin joined the race, which could
split the Pan-Green vote. So far, incumbent Mayor Hsu is
still leading in the polls, but running against two opponents
has complicated the race. KMT candidate Chen, who is weak
both in terms of personal charm and administrative resources,
is running for his third time for this mayoral position. An
Era TV poll in late September showed the DPP,s Hsu with 31
percent support, followed by the KMT,s Chen at 17.5 percent,
and the TSU,s Chien-Lin at 10.9 percent.

Tainan County

Candidates:

KMT: Kuo Tien-tsai
Doctor in Education, National Cheng Chi University, Taipei;
Master in Education, National Kaohsiung Normal University,
Kaohsiung; post-doctorate research, Illinois University;
former LY Member (2001-2004).

DPP: Su Huan-chih (Tainan County Magistrate)
LL.B., National Taiwan University, Taipei; LL.M., Fujen
Catholic University, Taipei.

Independent: Chang Po-sheng

Served as campaign assistant to Magistrate Su and President Chen during their previous campaigns. It was a surprise to the DPP that he registered as candidate.

Independent: Tsai Ssu-chieh
Retired government employee. This is his fourth time running in the magistrate election. He favors using the flood as his main issue in campaign.

Comment: The DPP cannot afford to lose in President Chen,s home county as such a loss would reflect the inherent weakness and lack of popularity of the Chen administration. Although Magistrate Su is leading in the polls, his performance is not considered good. The KMT,s candidate is young, highly educated, and "clean", so Kuo and Chairman Ma Ying-jeou may press very hard for a win in this election. Although there are two independent candidates, this is still considered a race between the DPP and KMT.

Kaohsiung County

Candidates:

KMT: Lin Yi-shih (LY Member, Kaohsiung)
Son of Lin Hsien-pao; the leader of the "Red Faction" in Kaohsiung County; supported Wang Jin-pyng in the KMT Chairman election; first elected to LY, Kaohsiung County, in 1998.

DPP: Yang Chiu-hsing (Incumbent)
Served as Provincial Assembly Member in 1994; served as LY Member, Kaohsiung County, in 1998.

Comment: Incumbent Magistrate Yang,s approval rating in the September Commonwealth survey was over 70 percent, and he was more than 15 points ahead of KMT candidate Lin in a late-September TVBS poll. The KMT candidate, however, has seen his poll numbers rise from a early low of 9 percent to his current 29 percent support. Kaohsiung County is generally considered to be a safe Green county, but the KMT is hoping the image of their young, well-educated, and spanking clean candidate will gel with the Ma Ying-jeou,s reform message, bringing out more undecided voters.

Pingtung County

Candidates:

KMT: Wang Chin-shih (Incumbent)
Master in Public Affairs, National Sun-Yat-Sen University, Kaohsiung.

DPP: Tsao Chi-hung
Bachelor in Education, Chinese Culture University, Taipei; former National Assembly Member (1992-1994); former Provincial Assembly Member (1994-1998); former LY Member (1999-2004).

Independent: Soong Li-hua (Pingtung County Councilor)
Wife of independent, but pro-KMT, LY Member Tsai Hao; served on Pingtung County Council since 2002.

Independent: Lee Ching-wen
He is an old face in Pingtung who has run in all legislative, magisterial and city council elections in the past ten years.

Comment: Since Soong,s husband is pro-KMT, her candidacy could split the Pan-Blue votes. The DPP has welcomed Soong's run in the hope of boosting Tsao,s chance to win. Local observers note that the recent investigation by authorities of independent candidate Soong for vote-buying might actually boost her popularity and prospects as the highly telegenic Soong may use it to gain support from sympathetic voters. The race between DPP candidate Tsao Chi-hung and KMT candidate Wang Chin-shi, before Soong joined the race, was already very close. A late-September UDN poll shows a virtual tie between Wang and Tsao, with Soong trailing by about 5 points, but 49 percent of voters are undecided.

Ilan County

Candidates:

KMT: Lu Kuo-hua (Mayor, Ilan City)
Ilan County native; Lu has worked in the Taiwan Provincial Government; served as a section chief in the Ilan County Government; and as Mayor of Ilan City.

DPP: Chen Ting-nan
Served as Ilan County Magistrate (1981-1989); then as Ilan LY Member (1989-2000); Minister of Justice (2000-2005).

Independent: Hsieh Lee Ching-yi

Comment: As the former county Magistrate, the DPP's Chen appeared to enjoy the upper hand in the early weeks of the pre-campaign, but KMT's Lu has been catching up rapidly in public opinion polls in recent weeks, probably because of his youthful image and pledge to revitalize Ilan's economy. Lu may get a further boost from the PFP candidate's decision to drop out of the race at registration time. This is Lu's second run for Ilan Magistrate, having lost in the previous election by just 7,000 votes. Chen and Lu are nearly tied according to various opinion polls, giving the KMT a chance of winning Ilan for the first time in 24 years. Pan-Greens, however, enjoy a 55 percent majority of voters in Ilan County.

Hualien County

Candidates:

KMT: Hsieh Shen-shan (Incumbent)
Former Chairman of the National Federation of Labor Union;
legislator, KMT deputy Secretary-General and
Secretary-General of the Executive Yuan.

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PFP: Fu Kun-chi (LY Member, Hualien County)
Served as Vice Chairman of the World Federation of Taiwanese
Chamber of Commerce; has served as Hualien LY Member since
2001.

DPP: Lu Po-chi (LY Member, Hualien County)
Hualien native; served as Member of the Hualien County
Council; has served as Hualien LY Member since 2001.

Independent: Ko Tzu-hai

Comment: Incumbent KMT Magistrate Hsieh enjoys strong local support with nearly 66 percent job approval rating in the September Commonwealth magazine poll. DPP challenger Lu will probably campaign on his close relationship with the central government, but Hsieh's lead may be insurmountable. Pan-Blue PFP candidate Fu, currently facing legal problems, is drawing little support. A China Times poll in September shows Hsieh with 52 percent support, compared to Lu's 9.4 percent and Fu's 6.4 percent. Independent candidate Ko is not a viable candidate.

Taitung County

Candidates:

KMT running as Independent: Wu Chun-li (Speaker, Taitung
County Council)
Graduate of Ho-chun Technical Junior College, Kaohsiung
County.

DPP running as Independent: Liu Chao-hao (Deputy Magistrate)
His elder brother was a former National Assembly member and a
KMT member; former Judge serving for 6 years.

Independent: Peng Chuan-kuo
Has never run for political office before, the name is
totally new, emerging only on registration day.

Comment: This race came as a surprise because both DPP and KMT have their members running as independent candidates. Incumbent Magistrate Hsu Ching-yuan (independent and former PFP member) gave up his bid for re-election, thus allowing his deputy, Liu Chao-hao, a DPP member, to register at the last minute as an independent candidate. Wu Chun-li, who would have registered as a KMT candidate, instead registered as an independent candidate, allegedly at the insistence of Chairman Ma in order to avoid the issue of the lawsuit and sentencing lodged against Wu for corruption.

Previous polls showed the current Magistrate Hsu's approval rating at 32.8 percent, Wu's at 19 percent, and 44 percent undecided. Whether Hsu's deputy, Liu will be able to inherit Hsu's support in the polls is doubtful, not to mention that Liu has not even prepared his campaign. But Liu, who is a new face in politics, will put KMT on the attack in the election.

Penghu County

Candidates:

KMT: Wang Chien-fa (Makung City Mayor)
Served in the County Government as Director of the Tax Bureau
and Bureau of Finance; serving as Mayor of Makung City, which
accounts for half of Penghu,s population.

DPP: Chen Kuang-fu (DPP Penghu County Office Chairman)
Chen lost the last LY election to Lin Ping-kun, who has had
strong support from local residents over the past decade;
served as Kaohsiung City LY member (1992-1998); lost as the
DPP candidate for Magistrate in 2001; stayed in Penghu to
serve as DPP Office Chairman in order to cultivate
connections for the upcoming elections.

Independent: Hsu Ching-ming
Former DPP member who ran in the last LY election in 2004 and
lost.

Comment: DPP candidate Chen Kuang-fu and KMT candidate Wang
Chien-fa are in a very close race. Local observers say Chen
Kuang-fu has a good chance to win since he is competing
against a different opponent from a previous legislative
election. Although KMT has dominated the county for long
time, the DPP anticipates a real shot at a win in this race.

Kinmen County

New Party: Lee Chu-feng (Incumbent)
Kinmen County native; served as Secretary of Kinmen County
Government; served as LY Member, Kinmen County.

Independent: Chen Ping

Independent: Chen Fu-hai

Comment: The KMT, PFP, and New Party have jointly agreed to
support Lee, who will likely win a second term in this "deep
Blue" county. The two independent candidates pose little
threat.

Lienchiang County (Matsu)

PFP: Chen Hsueh-sheng (Incumbent)

Independent: Yang Sui-sheng

Independent: Wu Shih-Tsu

Comment: Both the KMT and PFP have agreed to support Chen's
continued leadership of this Pan-Blue stronghold. Chen is
expected to win another term.

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